



WISCONSIN

DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Division of Economic Support
Bureau of Welfare Initiatives

**TO: Economic Support Supervisors
Economic Support Lead Workers
Training Staff
FSET Administrative and Provider Agencies
Child Care Coordinators
W-2 Agencies**

BWSP OPERATIONS MEMO

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Non W-2 ☐ W-2 ☐ CC ☒

PRIORITY: High

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Policy Analysis and Program Implementation Section**

SUBJECT: CHILD CARE TEMPORARY ABSENCE POLICY

CROSS REFERENCE: Child Day Care Manual, Chapter 1, 3.1.0, Chapter 2, 2.2.0.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately.

PURPOSE

This memo establishes a temporary absence policy for child care eligibility. Temporary absences for child care assistance groups have not been defined prior to this memo. This is a clarification of the child care assistance group policy and will be incorporated into the **next Child Day Care Manual** release which should be distributed later this year.

BACKGROUND

The Office of Child Care (OCC) has been receiving several inquiries about parents and children that are temporarily absent from the child care assistance group. The question being asked is whether or not to keep temporarily absent individuals in the child care assistance group. In response to these inquiries, OCC has developed a temporary absence policy that clarifies the child care assistance group definition in the **Child Day Care Manual** (Chapter 1, 3.1.0).

POLICY

The temporary absence policy for child care applies to parents and children that were in the household and are temporarily out of the household. Temporarily absent individuals must intend to return to the child care household.

A "parent" is a custodial parent, guardian, foster parent, legal custodian or person acting in the place of a parent. A temporary absence exists for child care eligibility purposes when the parent of a minor child is not living in the household because s/he is temporarily away from the household.

A "child" is a minor with a parent (as defined above) in the household. A temporary absence exists for child care eligibility purposes when the child is not living in the household because s/he is temporarily away from the household.

Temporary absence reasons include, but are not limited to:

1. Hospitalization or admission to another treatment facility.
2. Employment (for example, a fisherman or truck driver).
This reason does not apply to children.
3. Visits.
4. Attending a public educational institution or specialized school such as schools for the blind or deaf.
This applies to parents only if the parent that is temporarily absent continues to exercise care and control of the child. This applies to children that are still under the care and control of a parent in the household.

The continuous absence should be for no more than 6 months. However, the agency may extend that when there is a written plan which demonstrates that the parent or child intends to return to the household.

Parents that are temporarily absent must continue to exercise care and control of the children in the household. You may request written or other verification of the absent parent's or child's intent to return to the household.

Parents who are temporarily absent must still be in a **qualifying activity (Child Day Care Manual, Chapter 2, 2.2.0)**. In a **two-parent household**, both parents must be in an approved activity. If one parent is in a qualifying activity and the other is unable to care for the child(ren) due to a medical determination (verified by a doctor, psychiatrist, or psychologist), eligibility exists if all other financial and nonfinancial requirements are met. (**Child Day Care Manual, Chapter 1, 3.1.0**)

Temporary Absence — Parent Example: Rebecca and her spouse Ken have three children that are eligible for and receiving child care subsidies. On October 24, Ken is admitted to a hospital for medical reasons. It is anticipated that he will be there for 2 months and will return home after that time. Ken's doctors have verified that he cannot care for his three children while he is in the hospital. Rebecca will continue to work while Ken is gone. There are no other financial or nonfinancial changes in the household.

Ken is considered temporarily absent in this instance. The child care assistance group is still five and the family is still eligible for child care because Rebecca is in an approved activity and it has been verified that Ken cannot care for the children.

Children who are temporarily absent should continue to be included in the child care assistance group. Authorizations should not be created for temporarily absent children.

Temporary Absence – Child Example: Kelly has two daughters, Jennifer and Cassie, her family is eligible for and receiving child care subsidies. Cassie is going on vacation with her grandmother for two months over the summer but will return home after the vacation. There are no other financial or nonfinancial changes for the family.

Since Cassie will return home in less than six months, she should remain in the child care assistance group. However, she should not be authorized for child care while she is out of the household.

IMPLEMENTATION

This policy is effective immediately. Agencies should implement this policy on all new applications and all reviews and changes from this date on. Agencies should not implement this policy retroactively unless otherwise instructed to do so by the Office of Child Care.